



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

SECRET

December 14, 1978

Dear Jim,

Here are the papers I mentioned to you last night. I appreciate your offering to send me the draft for next week's Presidential briefing on China's leadership situation and will be happy to give you my comments if you wish.

Very best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "David".

David Dean
Director,
INR/REA

Enclosures.

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State Dept. review completed

1. **REPUDIATING THE MAO ERA**
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Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-p'ing has made much progress in the current party work conference toward repudiating Mao's policies and vindicating his own. This is evidenced by the favorable mention in the PRC press of high-level victims of the Cultural Revolution and the reinterpretation of other events. The rewriting of history so far has been handled in a low-key manner in the name of "unity and stability." But it will help Teng further purge opponents and place supporters, and could lead gradually to open criticism of Mao. Nearly all the major decisions associated with Mao since the mid-1950's have now been indirectly repudiated.

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Recent Chinese media references indicate Teng has gained high-level agreement to rehabilitate:

- thousands of non-party intellectuals labeled "rightists" in 1957;
- former Defense Minister P'eng Te-huai (deceased), who became a symbol of opposition to Mao after he was purged in 1959 for criticizing economic policies and the politicization of the army;
- former Peking Mayor P'eng Chen and the former heads of important party offices who were purged in 1966 for opposing Mao's efforts to reform the party;
- former regional party bureau chief T'ao Chu (deceased), who was brought to Peking to aid Mao in the Cultural Revolution, but disappeared in 1967 after opposing the purges of Liu and Teng.

Evidence also suggests Teng may soon achieve exoneration of former President Li Shao-ch'i, who with Teng, implemented liberal economic policies for recovery after the Great Leap Forward which led to their purge.

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These rehabilitations have been accompanied by a "reversal of verdicts" on key events of the Cultural Revolution. The media, for instance, has criticized:

- the January 1967 "revolution" in Shanghai which became the model for violent nationwide power grabs by the radicals; and
- the March 1967 directive which brought the army into the Cultural Revolution, and ensured Lin Piao's rise to power.

The following incidents have now been found praiseworthy:

- the February 1967 move by top party leaders, including T'ao Chu, to defend Liu and Teng and to bring the Cultural Revolution to a halt; and
- the July 1967 Wuhan rebellion in which local leaders kidnapped central emissaries in protest against Cultural Revolution directives.

So far, the matter of Mao's personal role in these events has not been addressed. Very likely, the party leadership will stress Mao's early contributions as a guerilla leader and founder, and continue placing most of the blame for his later mistakes on Lin Piao and the "gang of four." (CONFIDENTIAL)

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